

Senate Bill 0872

State Board of Social Work Examiners-Temporary License to Practice Social Work

Finance Committee

March 10, 2023

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

I represent Arrow Child & Family Ministries, a multi-service non-profit that serves over 500 vulnerable youth and families in Maryland each year, some who have entered child welfare and others who are at risk of out-of-home placement.

Maryland is in the midst of two crises that put youth and families at risk: children's mental health and the hospital overstay and overall placement crisis. While each crisis has many contributing factors, a lack of qualified social workers is a driver of both. Many providers of services to youth, Arrow included, has seen the lack of qualified social workers negatively impact our ability to operate at full capacity. As a result, children and teens either stay in inappropriate placements or don't get needed services at all. The result is costly and damaging.

The current licensing process is both cumbersome and inequitable. This bill allows for qualified candidates to get a temporary license to practice if the only barrier is not passing the test.

We need a system that ensures that qualified candidates are not needlessly turned away from the profession. **Arrow Child & Family Ministries asks this committee to give SB0872 a favorable reading.**